"Specialization in religion among the people of Ifalik is a matter of degree. There is no sharply differentiated priesthood. Yet two men were distinguished, while we were there, as oracles of a god and one other was recognized as a neophyte. Still another was the leading diviner; while several, especially Tom and his fellow-navigators, controlled limited lore and powers in connection with some other specialty.

The oracles were Orgalebwā and Gargeligar. Orgalebwā, old and emaciated, was confined to his sleeping-mat, on the floor of the house at Weluāra which was also the house of the great gods. He was the one upon whom the god descended to assemble the people for the most elaborate invocation ceremony we saw. Gargeligar was the most [193] frequently possessed and far the most active, both as master of ceremonies and as healer. In his capacity as master of ceremonies he was called taubwòngbwòng. This term, if I understood Tom's explanation, means master of waving to and fro. This refers to the beginning of the full-fledged invocation ceremony, when a fringe of dried coconut leaf, rather like a miniature thatch-sheet, is waved to and from by men who squat about the altar of the great gods and intone the first part of the hymn of invocation. The meaning of this particular bit of ritual has been extended to cover the whole. Sarfert translated what seems to be the same word as Anrufung or invocation. Indeed, Gargeligar told Spiro that bwòngbwòng is the same as gapeng, the name of the song and dance of invocation; but Tom denied this.

The neophyte was Truesai, son but not heir of the paramount chief. He had not yet

been possessed by the god, Spiro was told. He seemed to be word-perfect in the hymn of invocation; but so did a number of others. He sang part of it as a solo at the great invocation ceremony. He was prominent in dances of Falālap, and walked with the chief mourners - though he was not one of the closest relatives - in at least one funeral procession, when the body of the woman Nobwór was carried from her house to a canoe for burial at sea. Both he and Gargeligar were muscular, handsome men, fond of adorning themselves with flowers and filling the public eye. A foreigner, to whom matrilineal succession is not a matter of course, might well wonder whether one reason for Truesai's taking this road to prominence might be that his father was paramount chief, while he, as a member of his mother's lowly clan (Bwèl) had no chance of succeeding to a title, unless one exceptional and even questionable possibility announced by the chiefs - that of a man succeeding his father - were invoked in his case. Everyone seemed to expect that the god would descend on Truesai later, and that he would succeed Gargeligar as taubwóngbwóng.

Divine possession was not strictly limited to Orgalebwā and Gargeligar. They seemed, indeed, to be the first choice of the god TIlItr as messenger of Aluelap. It was through Gargeligar's mouth that TIlItr first sang the two final stanzas or sections of the hymn of invocation. The preceding parts were known before Gargeligar's time. He told us that after the god left him he knew nothing of what had happened. Several times we saw Gargeligar when the god was supposed to be upon him. He was unquestionably in an

exalted state. To us it seemed that, whatever other influences might be at work, he showed every sign of having imbibed freely of fermented toddy. Orgalebwā was the only one I heard speaking in the special way Tom called 'talk for god'. It consisted of a strange intonation, - beginning on a high pitch, descending waveringly to a low one, then starting on the high pitch again. Whether the words uttered differed much from ordinary speech I could not be sure. The people seemed to understand them without difficulty. I could make out nothing; but this was rather early in our stay, when I understood very little even of ordinary speech. From time to time the god descended upon others. The youth Talimeira, assigned by the chiefs to help us, told Spiro that the god had descended upon him during one of the nights of walking and singing with Gargeligar. Asked how he knew, he said that he found himself shaking from head to foot, and singing at the top of his voice. He was distinctly a 'minor,' and in all probability had not had any fermented toddy. At the time of the first great ceremony, before any of this nocturnal activity, the chiefs told Tom to explain to us that we would probably notice the young men walking about at night and singing. They had Tom caution us against thinking that the youths were drunk. The psychological nature of this divine possession falls in Spiro's field on [sic] inquiry."

Only a wise man (tau baneban) can make magic. His equipment consists of

a) tšöripö: young coconut pinnates bound around his right wrist.

b) xejapetax: young coconut pinnates fastened around the neck, and tied with the characteristic knot (buxebux).

c) üwüd tabi'ip: young coconut leaf strips, which are used to rub the patient, while the spells are uttered; then the strips are hung on the canoe mast for Alülue.

d) xürup: "medicine", stirred in coconut water, which the patient drinks.

e) xuäli üwüd: leaf pinnates (ilagit) of the coconut frond; they are used like c) and then laid in the canoe.

f) popöu: a large palm frond, which is used to drive the demon of disease out of the house.

g) täötä: the same kind of medicine bag that is used on Polowat; it is made of coconut fibre from the leaf covering (leaf strips for decoration - eäm, fibre pouch - üd, medicine - täfe.)